

Spring
Disturbance Flow

Data transfer
pilot

Buffalo Soldiers'
legacy

Safety Incentive
Program

CLOSED Circuit

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

JUNE 2021

**Innovating and
enhancing**



CLOSED Circuit

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On the cover

The Colorado River in lower Glen Canyon made for a unique sight during the recent 4,000 cubic feet per second low-flow experiment. Read the full story on Page 1. (Photo by Larry Stevens of the Museum of Northern Arizona.)





Spring Disturbance Flow charts new highs, lows

Photos by Craig Ellsworth

Since August 1991, the Environment team from the Colorado River Storage Project Management Center has provided input on flow experiments being conducted by the Department of the Interior at Glen Canyon Dam. These experiments are coordinated through the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, a public-private partnership committed to improving the health of the Colorado River below the dam and into Grand Canyon National Park.

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The Lava Falls rapid was reduced to 4,000 cubic feet per second during the experiment. Lava Falls is the biggest, and according to Fish Biologist *Craig Ellsworth* "probably the scariest," rapid on the Colorado River. The river drops 27 feet over the course of a quarter of a mile.



Several U.S. Geological Survey employees participated in the river trip, including Scott Wright, Mike Dodrill and Laura Tennent. They encountered unique perspectives of familiar sights, such as Vulcan's Anvil.

Experiments are conducted in order to determine the effects that varying releases have on rivers, populations of aquatic creatures and food sources for fish. This helps the biologists to better understand potential impacts of hydropower production and help ensure a healthy ecosystem.

In March, researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey's Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center had a rare opportunity to study how spring floods affect the production of bugs and fish as well as other conditions that they are interested in improving below Glen Canyon Dam.

The best part? They didn't even need an actual flood.

The importance of disturbance

The term disturbance can carry negative connotations but, in natural systems, disturbance is a critical part of the life history of many organisms.

Disturbances in rivers and streams, for instance, help maintain biological diversity by making new substrates and resources available. Of course, not all disturbances are created equal, nor are they equally beneficial.

The magnitude of the disturbance plays an important role; flows that are higher or lower than usual lead to different results in terms of the ability of algae and aquatic insects to flourish. The frequency of the disturbance and the timing – such as whether it occurs during spring or autumn – are also important factors.

Flow experiments qualify as disturbances, though they are obviously controlled and planned far ahead of time. With “disturbances” such as these, researchers can observe the specific impact they had and tailor future releases and experiments to meet resource goals of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program for the maximum benefit of river health.

Hydropower releases can impact the lifecycles of fish, as well as the insects and algae upon which they depend. Maintaining the health of the ecosystem is crucial and of high concern to WAPA in terms of its hydroelectric power operations.

The 2016 Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan established High-Flow Experiments as the principal type of disturbance for aquatic

species. Previous HFEs suggested that spring would be the best time for a disturbance flow on bugs and algae, which are important food items for fish.

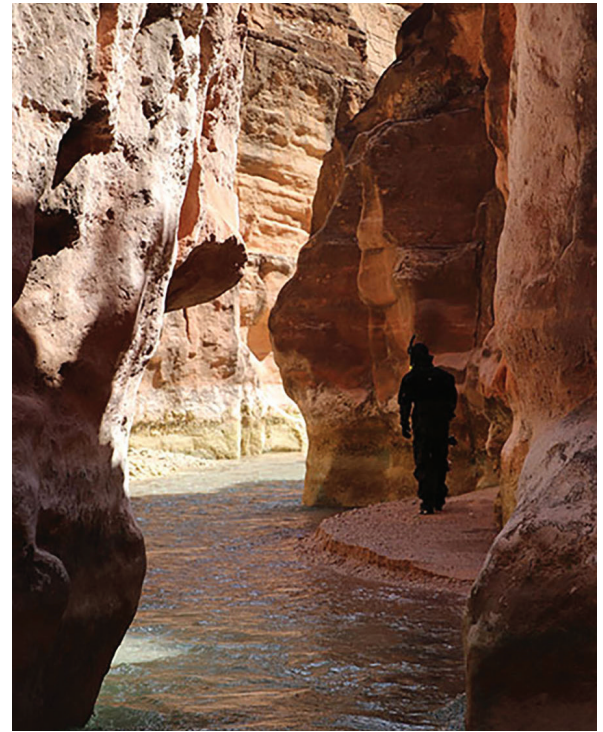
Some necessary repair work to an apron – or the footing of the dam – at Glen Canyon Dam provided the opportunity to study the effects of a low flow, followed by a higher flow with the water that was held back during the repair.

“The Bureau of Reclamation would have had to drop the flows to perform the apron repair anyway,” said Fish Biologist **Craig Ellsworth**. “Since we were able to get the timing worked out, we were able to put a little bit of a spin on this particular event to follow with a high flow, which we termed a Spring Disturbance Flow, and collect some valuable data in a way that had very little impact to hydropower production.”

Because the Spring Disturbance Flow occurred in March when power prices were relatively low, and because there wasn't any water bypassed around the turbines at Glen Canyon Dam, the cost to hydropower production was estimated to be only a couple thousand dollars. This is significantly



Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center scientists collect aquatic insect samples during the low-flow experiment in the western Grand Canyon.



Dave Herasimtschuk of Freshwater Illustrated took the opportunity to film flannelmouth suckers spawning in Havasu Creek.

lower than traditional HFEs, which incur costs between \$1 million and \$3 million.

A flood of information

Traditionally, flow experiments originate through the DOI. In this case, the proposal came from stakeholders in the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, particularly the angling groups who use the rainbow trout fishery in the Glen Canyon Dam tailwater.

"We as a program developed this one and are advocating for it," said Ellsworth. "It's kind of a bottom-up approach this time around, and we've been working on it as a group, collaboratively, for around a year and a half."

The experiment was intended to replicate a spring flood.

"A spring flood is something we really haven't seen at Glen Canyon since 2008," Ellsworth explained. "We are interested in learning about how spring floods affect the production of bugs and fish and all these other things we are trying to improve below the dam."

In coordinating the details with other stakeholders and the GCMRC,

Ellsworth was pleased with how well the idea came together.

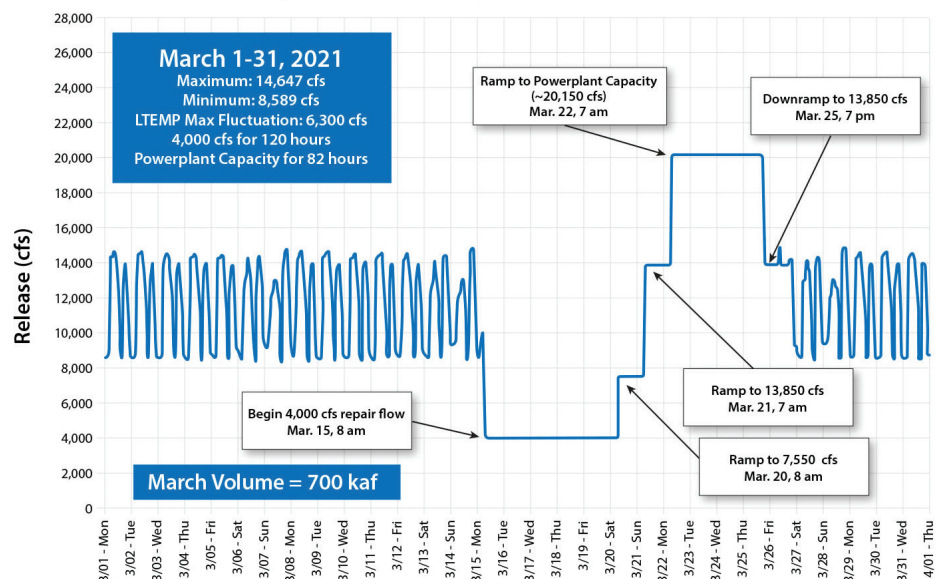
"We've been pleasantly surprised about the amount of traction that we've gotten," he said.

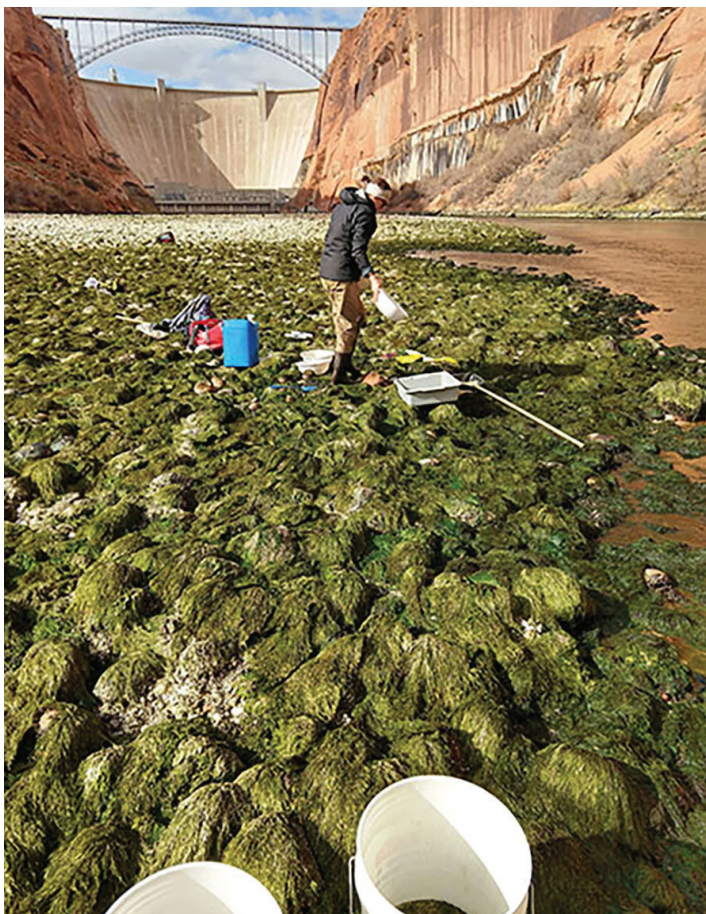
The plan, in brief, was to draw the river down significantly on March 15, with flows only around 4,000 cubic feet per second. This would allow divers

to perform the necessary repair work on the apron. Then, between March 20 - 22, flows would be ramped up to around 20,150 cfs. They would continue at this rate until March 25.

"We could get a huge amount of valuable data about spring flooding, and we could do it as a program, with careful planning and being fully

Glen Canyon Dam Hourly Release Pattern: March 2021





Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center scientists collect aquatic macrophyte samples during the low-flow experiment below Glen Canyon Dam. (Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation.)



Participants take a brief lunch break on Boater's Beach at Bright Angel Creek. The Kaibab Suspension Bridge in the background connects Phantom Ranch with the south rim trail system.

prepared to monitor its effect with the GCMRC," said Ellsworth.

Low-flow river trip, high-quality data

Several days before the flow experiment began, researchers from the USGS embarked on a river trip to monitor the effects of the Spring Disturbance Flow on the aquatic insects in Grand Canyon.

They departed from Lees Ferry in Arizona, positioning themselves in the western part of the Grand Canyon prior to the flow reduction.

This part of the canyon was of particular interest to the researchers, due to recent increases in the population of endangered humpback chub. Departing ahead of the experiment allowed them to raft the nearly 200 miles downstream to be in position to collect their low-flow samples.

"Efforts are being made to better understand why populations of the endangered humpback chub are increasing in this part of the canyon, including trying to figure out if recent changes in the insect community might be fueling this change," Ellsworth explained.

He described the sight of the Colorado River at such a low flow as an exceptional experience.

"The river hadn't been held so low for so long since the 1980s," he said. "The low water made for an exciting trip through the big rapids on the river."

It may have been an exciting trip, but it was also a safe one, completed without incident. Ellsworth credits the professionalism of their river guides, who also had not seen the Colorado River as low as it was during this trip.

"Everything was different," he continued. "Some of the big rapids were

smaller and some of the smaller rapids were bigger than anyone expected."

Through the summer, the team will study and continue to monitor the river below Glen Canyon Dam and through the Grand Canyon. The resulting data will be reported back to the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program in January 2022.

The team is confident that their data and observations will prove to be extremely valuable.

"It was quite remarkable to be able to see the river this low," said Ellsworth. "It provided us a great opportunity to understand how the riverbed is structured. We look forward to sharing what we find. Everything we learn during this experiment is one more step CRSP is taking toward keeping the Colorado River healthy." □

Get to know WAPA's COO

By Teresa Waugh

In 2018, **Kevin Howard** was selected as WAPA's chief operating officer. In this role, Howard oversees a staff of around 100 employees and provides the executive leadership and strategic direction for the security, asset management and technical programs critical to the organization's mission.

Closed Circuit sat down with Howard recently to learn more about him.

What is your most rewarding experience at WAPA thus far?

In my early career I was the project engineer overseeing the upgrade of Flaming Gorge Substation in Utah. It was like building a car while driving it, since the substation was in service the entire time and controls and relaying had to be sequentially cut over from the powerplant to the new control building while ensuring that all equipment was protected and operational, except coordinating strategic equipment clearances, throughout. This was the most complex technical project I led in 17 years of working in the field.

Mid-career, it was being involved in safety initiatives as a maintenance manager. I was honored to implement the first daily-wear arc flash clothing program to protect craft employees from the significant risk of injury in the event of an arc flash and helped facilitate policy change for 100% attachment during climbing activities on all structures.

Most recently, as COO, I enjoy the many personal, professional and productive relationships as a member of various councils and teams: the Western Maintenance Managers Council for five years, the Power System Operations Council for four and a half years and the Senior Leadership Team for three years, to name a few. WAPA continues to be a great place to work!

What is something most people do not know about you?

I grew up in Montrose, Colorado, on a small farm raising sheep and a few horses and spent most of my childhood irrigating fields, putting up hay and feeding, herding, vaccinating and lambing sheep.

I was also in 4-H and FFA through my sophomore year in high school. At that point, I had a choice of taking two hours of agriculture classes a day in my junior year or moving into physics, algebra, trigonometry and calculus. I took the latter route and ended up with an engineering degree. Looking back, I think I made the right choice.

What are you reading right now? Do you have a favorite author?

I oscillate among history, self-development and fiction. I am currently reading the Orphan X series by Greg Hurwitz. It is one of the best fictional action series I have read, and it provides entertainment while I am using the elliptical in the basement. I am looking forward to the end of the pandemic and returning to the gym! Or, since I'll soon be fully vaccinated, maybe I will begin integrating back in the gym.

My favorite authors are probably Jeff Shaara and Michael Shaara, who wrote historical fiction about the revolutionary and civil wars.



What are your communication and leadership styles?

I like to communicate openly and encourage folks I am working with to do the same. My leadership style is based on trust and respect. I always try to respect everyone I work with and value their opinions, expertise and input. I certainly don't have all of the answers and it takes all of us working together to tackle the challenges we deal with every day.

I also trust that everyone is working to meet her or his responsibilities and advance WAPA's mission, at least until proven otherwise.

Would you tell us about your coworkers at home?

My sole "coworker" is my wife, Sherry, although she seems to get out of the house much more often than I do. I'm a little jealous!

She's been great at putting up with me when I took over her office, and when I complain about working from home for 14 months straight, which happens regularly. She also continues to feed me breakfast – most mornings – and get me out for a walk or to grab Chick-fil-A breakfast occasionally.

I just lost my other coworker a little over a month ago. Mia was our almost 16-year-old Shih Tzu/Maltese. She was great company and often provided a good work break to take in a walk, some ball chasing or petting. I miss her! □



OSEM, Strategy partner for security culture

By Eric Barendsen

The Office of Security and Emergency Management and the Strategy office have teamed up to assess WAPA's security culture. They will release a survey this month to gauge employees' perceptions of where improvements in security culture are needed.

The survey will provide a snapshot of the current culture. It will also identify gaps and shape future initiatives by pinpointing opportunities to promote the health of WAPA's security culture.

"We need feedback from all departments and regions," said Director of Security and Emergency Management **Bruce Watson**.

"Security culture" refers to the norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that support a safe and secure workplace for all employees. Like the broader work culture, misunderstandings and conflict around values and prioritization can negatively impact the security culture.

"To promote a culture that makes WAPA a great place to work, we need to ensure security of all of WAPA's assets – our people, our facilities and other physical assets," said Acting Chief Strategy Officer **Stacey Decker**. "Through that, we're ensuring mission success, we're ensuring the security of the national grid and we're creating a secure and healthy work environment for our employees."

Watson and Decker selected focus areas and attributes used in assessing WAPA's successful safety culture to define a healthy security culture. The upcoming survey will assess similar attributes to measure how WAPA employees see the organization's progress and identify where more work is needed.

Taking ownership

"To have a strong security culture, everyone needs to see their ownership in it," Decker said. "Do folks see themselves as owning and contributing to the culture? Just like our safety culture, we all need to take personal accountability."

One aim of the survey is to gauge awareness of the part each employee plays in ensuring a vigorous security culture.

"If there isn't that personal commitment to everyone's security and the buy-in that everybody plays a role, the culture won't be healthy," Watson said.

According to Watson, when employees are committed, programs such as these are more successful. He used the example of the random security checks at Headquarters, which were designed to protect people through increased screening for weapons and other banned items.

"The support and understanding of what that program does, what it means and everybody's roles and responsibilities makes it more effective," Watson said.

"Another piece is ensuring we have the psychological safety so that folks are confident in bringing forward security issues," Decker said.

Employees need to feel safe to speak candidly, without fear of retribution, for security culture to evolve.

"Risks need to be known about, and they need to be mitigated," Watson added.

For example, when it comes to security systems, assumptions that equipment such as security cameras are performing at their original specifications may not be true. OSEM is working with Maintenance and Information Technology to identify system shortcomings and schedule repair and replacement in a reasonable timeframe.

Leadership's role

Building alignment across all of WAPA can help ensure the success of OSEM's critical role in enabling the broader WAPA mission.

"A healthy security culture helps enable the visions and goals of our leadership," Watson said. "By keeping people and assets safe and protected, Security is available to do that."

The analysis of the survey results will look at various functional groups across WAPA to better understand their opinions across a range of attributes that contribute to security culture, such as clear expectations, accountability, teamwork, mutual respect and the effective resolution of reported problems.

After analyzing the results, OSEM and Strategy plan to brief the Senior Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team in late summer or early fall. They will then identify strategies and actions to close any identified gaps, with an emphasis on WAPA-wide initiatives.

"Clearly defining what our desired security culture looks like and developing a strategy to get us there will help ensure leadership across WAPA is aligned on what we are working toward," Decker explained. "As leaders, we are responsible for championing these efforts and modeling the behaviors that make for a healthy security culture."

Building trust

WAPA customers also own a stake in the organization's security. Fixing vulnerabilities in a security system requires funding. When WAPA invests on behalf of its customers, Watson explained, the organization has an obligation to make sure these systems operate as designed.

Securing sufficient funds for lifecycle management of security

systems requires establishing trust that the dollars will be spent wisely, he said. It also depends on the ability of functional groups across WAPA to reach consensus regarding their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and enhancing the organization's security culture.

OSEM and Strategy ask that employees take a few minutes to support this effort when the survey becomes available.

"Let's analyze this in a methodical way and see what areas WAPA needs to work on, areas that may not be as healthy," Watson said. "Through a healthy security culture, we can further mature the effectiveness of our security program." □

Note: Barendsen is a public affairs specialist.

Attributes of a healthy security culture

Leadership

- Demonstrated security leadership.
- Risk-informed decision making.
- Management engagement and time in field.
- Staff recruitment, selection, retention and development.
- Open communication and fostering an environment free from retribution.
- Clear expectations and accountability.

Employee/worker engagement

- Personal commitment to everyone's security.
- Teamwork and mutual respect.
- Participation in work planning and improvement.
- Mindful of hazards and controls.

Organizational learning

- Credibility, trust and reporting errors and problems.
- Effective resolution of reported problems.
- Performance monitoring through multiple means.
- Use of operational experience.
- Questioning attitude.

Pilot automates transformer data transfer

By Kevon Storie

A significant part of Asset Management's mission is protecting WAPA's most important physical equipment. Power transformers, which convert voltage to different levels, rank high on that list.

Ranging from \$1.5 million to \$4 million each, transformers are among WAPA's most expensive pieces of transmission equipment. They also have one of the longest lead times to procure. A method for calculating a health index score for these assets is needed for many maintenance and investment decisions.

One revealing factor in a transformer's health index score is the megavolt ampere, or MVA, that passes through the transformer. The more heavily loaded transformers tend to see a shorter lifespan than lightly loaded ones.

Scattered across WAPA territory

Although the connection between MVA load and asset health is relatively straightforward, getting this data from all of the transformers is anything but. The sheer quantity of data alone makes collection, storage and analysis a daunting task. WAPA's supervisory control and data acquisition, or SCADA, system receives transformer data every two to four seconds. It's not just a mountain but a mountain range of information.



To complicate things further, WAPA's different regions have different SCADA systems and methods of storing the data. Asset Management does not have access to these systems and uses the Maximo record-keeping system as their data repository for holding health-index information. Despite the importance of these assets to system reliability, WAPA had no standard practice, routine or tools for collecting and updating transformer MVA data.

The Asset Management Program Initiation Project set out to collect that data in 2015 to calculate the first transformer health-index scores, and the experience was eye opening. Maintenance had to request three years' worth of data from SCADA and that data had to be sifted and scrubbed to make sure the information correlated to the right equipment. This process had to be done one asset at a time since there was no established method for verification.

"It was a huge undertaking that took months," recalled Information Technology Specialist **Matthew Bailey**. Only then could the data be entered – manually – into Maximo. "We had to 'shrink' the data. Just transferring it all at once into Maximo would overload the system."

This lack of integration meant that the time- and labor-intensive process was only conducted every three years, which left planners and analysts making critical calculations with old data. As Bailey learned more about how the data was used, it became clear that the data-management practice was ripe for an overhaul.

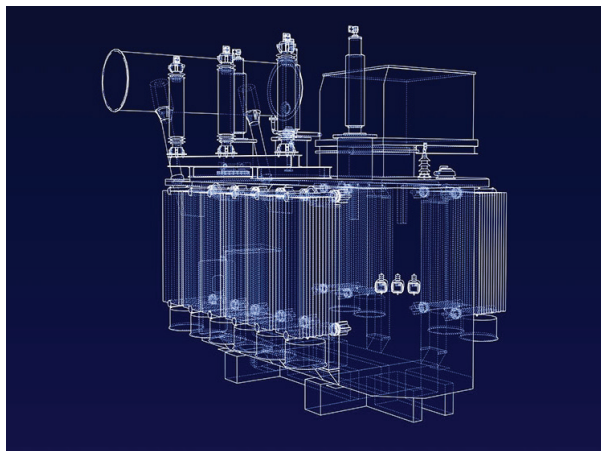
New tools change game

Fortunately, the evolving technology landscape presented the opportunity. Over the next few years, WAPA licensed the enterprise version of the PI Historian – PI referring to "plant interface" – which allowed WAPA to expand its use for data storage throughout the organization.

This move toward a standardized platform brought access to new tools, including one called Asset Framework. "This was the missing link

in connecting SCADA data with other systems," said Bailey.

Asset Framework allowed data stored in PI Historian to be organized in more meaningful ways, such as adding asset identification data with devices used in the field. It also enabled PI Historian to store and calculate the near-constant data input in smaller chunks that could be transferred to Maximo more frequently. A pilot project was the next step to test whether or not these capabilities could be applied to transformer loading data.



Testing through teamwork

The Rocky Mountain and Desert Southwest regions were the first to build and deploy PI Asset Framework and send that data to WAPA's central PI system. This made the regions' transformer-loading data available for transferring from PI Historian to Maximo.

The effort to create an automated process for linking data in PI Historian to assets in Maximo was launched in spring 2020. Using RM and DSW transformers as the sample data, the proposed framework assigned identification numbers to assets that could be used across platforms. The pilot also established an integration between TIBCO and PI Asset Framework that ultimately enables PI data to be sent to systems such as Maximo.

An interdisciplinary group came together in the spirit of collaboration to achieve that goal. Team members from IT, Asset Management specialists from Headquarters and the regions and subject matter experts on Maximo, PI Historian and enterprise architecture all contributed to the project.

There were a lot of challenges and obstacles involved, Bailey acknowledged. "But the team has done a great job of overcoming them," he said. "And we did it all remotely during the pandemic!"

Part of the bigger picture

The framework successfully retrieved accurate, weekly MVA data, calculated transformer load and transferred that data from PI Historian to Maximo. Trended over time, this data

will refine health-index analytics and paint a more detailed picture of the condition and performance of critical assets in WAPA's fleet. Another significant benefit of the methodology is that it reduces the time commitment and human error that are part of a manual process.

"Data integrity is a key tenet of Asset Management's strategy to provide consistent and clean asset data to our end-use customers," said Vice President of Asset Management **Chris Lyles**. "Developing this framework minimizes the human element of manual load calculation and

helps us achieve a much better end state."

The success of the project suggests that the process is scalable and could yield the same benefits to other regions as their data is brought into PI Historian in the next couple of years.

"We proved that we can get data out to our consumers much more quickly with this new framework," Bailey noted. "It can be applied to other assets besides transformers eventually."

The standardized PI system that provided the foundation for the pilot is a central piece of WAPA's Data as a Strategic Asset effort. Implementing central storage for data makes it more accessible and consistent in presentation.

As it becomes easier across WAPA to locate and analyze information for business decisions, both short- and long-term users will gain greater appreciation for the value of real-time data. □

Note: Storie is a technical writer who works under the Wyandotte Services contract.



Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the IDC has been advancing its efforts through virtual meetings, engagement with leadership and the initiative of dedicated WAPA staff.

Face to face with Inclusion and Diversity

By Eric Barendsen

Nobody booked a last-minute flight. No boxes of coffee or communal donuts rewarded the early risers. Yet WAPA's Inclusion and Diversity Committee still held one of its most productive meetings of the year.

On March 10-11, the committee met via WebEx for its second virtual face-to-face since the COVID-19 pandemic began. One year had passed since the committee last met in-person, the same week in March 2020 that WAPA began transitioning to maximum telework.

IDC meetings typically begin with an "inclusion and diversity moment," a practice that the committee encourages supervisors to incorporate into their staff meetings. A participant shares a thought or experience that reveals

something about them and their view of inclusion and diversity.

Throughout the March meeting, attendees contributed many inclusion and diversity moments, ranging from how to intentionally use inclusive language as an endeavor to a story about a man who ran marathons to bring joy to his son who has a disability.

This was former Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel's final IDC meeting. He acknowledged how far WAPA's culture has moved in embracing the principles of inclusion and diversity

and how it makes WAPA a stronger organization.

The IDC's senior sponsors, Interim Administrator and CEO **Tracey LeBeau** and Acting Senior Vice President and Colorado River Storage Project Manager **Rodney Bailey**, helped set the tone by disclosing aspects of themselves.

LeBeau shared some of her personal background as a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe of South Dakota and discussed how the building of federal dams affected her Tribe.

She also suggested ways to advance the culture of inclusion and diversity by leveraging the committee.

"We can build excitement about being a participant on this team and rotate folks though it," LeBeau said. "As you participate hands on, you always gain more excitement and respect. Getting more people involved on this committee will go a long way toward continuing and building on our momentum."

Bailey explained that, for him, inclusion and diversity means treating others as we treat ourselves.

"Many of you know I was raised in a very religious environment," he said. "From the Bible, the two great commands are 'Love God' and 'Love our neighbor as ourselves.' I would like that to be achieved at WAPA."

The committee welcomed guest speaker Shalanda Baker, the Department of Energy's deputy director for energy justice. Her new office will implement President Biden's Justice40 Initiative—a plan to deliver 40% of the overall benefits of climate investments to disadvantaged communities and inform equitable research, development and deployment within the DOE.

"It's not that the president has made a significant commitment to communities of color; he's made a significant commitment to the rest of us, to everybody," Baker said of the initiative. "Equity is not zero sum. We all benefit."

Baker will look for ways that WAPA and other offices across the DOE can focus their resources to support disadvantaged communities, such as through procurement of equipment and services from small businesses.

Acting Chief Strategy Officer **Stacey Decker** then provided an update on WAPA's culture through the lenses of organizational development and shared language, such as WAPA's core values and updated mission and vision statements. Driving mass adoption of inclusion and diversity requires us to put structures and systems in place which reinforce the culture we want to build, she said.

"It's creating that vision and helping people see it for themselves," said Decker. "And the other piece is perseverance despite the obstacles that come up."

Financial Operations Supervisor **Neilia Abban**, who is on detail as WAPA's equity coordinator, spoke about working directly with the Senior Leadership Team to develop a plan to advance WAPA's commitment to racial and social equity.

During her detail, she is also partnering with Human Resources and the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity in identifying barriers to recruitment, retention and advancement, as well as examining policies and practices that negatively impact inclusion, diversity and equity at WAPA.

"In mapping out a three-year action plan, we are looking at a wide range of recommendations to move the culture forward, including holding conversations about race and conducting a longer-term analysis based on WAPA-wide metrics," she said. "There are many more ways we can improve; it's exciting to be doing this critical work at a time when real change is possible."

The March meeting capped off a year of IDC activities advanced through remote work environments, including engagement with the SLT to develop action items inspired by last summer's protests around racial justice. The IDC's Racial Equity subgroup advised and provided recommendations to the SLT as it developed WAPA's Statement on Racial and Social Justice, which was published in August 2020.

Since then, the IDC has primarily focused on updating its strategic plan to set the course for future work.

"It was time to clarify our direction and re-examine the IDC's strategy from the ground up," said Human Performance Program Manager and IDC Co-chair **Krystall Valencia**.

"Stepping back to deliberate on the next phase of top-priority projects ensures we're all aligned and moving in the same direction."

Recent monthly calls and the virtual face-to-face meetings in December 2020 and March 2021 featured deep dives into the IDC's strategy, led by Continuous Process Improvement Program Manager and IDC Co-chair **Laura Dawson**.

"By validating the group's shared goals, identifying objectives and prioritizing specific projects within each objective, our committee can use its limited resources more effectively," she said. "The committee has so many ideas for action that can be better achieved with a purposeful and focused strategy." □

Note: Barendsen is a public affairs specialist.

Strategic Objectives of the IDC:

- Increase employee engagement and inclusion.
- Maintain a diverse workforce.
- Integrate inclusion and diversity principles and practices across WAPA.
- Leverage diversity.

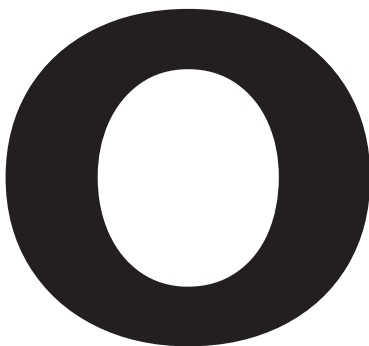


Human Performance Manager and IDC Co-chair **Krystall Valencia** addresses the committee during its last in-person face-to-face meeting in March 2020, just days before WAPA transitioned to maximized telework.

Employees learn history of Buffalo Soldiers



During his presentation, Roosevelt "Showpiece" Brown spoke about the history of the Buffalo Soldiers and the origin of their nickname.



On March 18, WAPA employees were invited to attend a virtual presentation by Roosevelt "Showpiece" Brown, president of the Arizona chapter of the National Association of Buffalo Soldiers & Troopers Motorcycle Club.



We represent the strong and proud men and the heritage of the Buffalo Soldiers. We want to keep that legacy alive.



At this event, hosted by the Desert Southwest Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Committee, Brown spoke about the history of Buffalo Soldiers and how the largest Black motorcycle club in the world is keeping their stories alive.

"My goal is to make you excited enough to go out and research some more about the original Buffalo Soldiers, some brave men who were a big part of our American history," said Brown at the start of the presentation.

He spoke about the Buffalo Soldiers as an all-Black cavalry infantry unit in the U.S. Army that began in 1866.

"The U.S. Army was so depleted from the Civil War that they allowed freed slaves to join," he said. "They offered up to \$13 per month. Even though they were free, it was hard for them to make a living in those days. As you can imagine, a lot of them joined the Army. And, again, even though they were free, they still didn't have the same rights as the white soldiers."

The Black soldiers were segregated into their own regiments and were charged with accompanying white settlers as they moved West, protecting them from hazards that included outlaws.

In addition, they were charged with establishing and guarding forts and national parks.

"The Buffalo Soldiers were the first, original park rangers," said Brown. "They were also the original law in the West. They kept the peace in towns that sprung up. Until they were able to

place sheriffs and deputies, the Buffalo Soldiers would police the towns."

He explained that even though the Buffalo Soldiers worked to build and guard the towns and forts, and were expected to give their lives to protect them, they were not allowed to sleep on the premises. Instead, they had to establish their own camps nearby due to continuing discrimination.

Even so, Brown said, they were deeply committed to their service.

"They were proud soldiers and they did a very good job with this," he explained. "In fact, the Buffalo Soldiers had the lowest desertion rate of any regiments. They took their duty seriously and they served with great pride."

It was due to this demeanor and reputation that the Cheyenne Tribe gave the soldiers their nickname.

"The Black soldiers at first did not like the name," said Brown. "They thought it was derogatory. But as they learned more about the Cheyenne and how to communicate with them, they learned that the name was given to them out of respect."

The name was meant to reflect the extent to which the soldiers' behavior, as the Cheyenne had observed it, lined up with the noble traits that the Tribe attributed to the buffalo.

"The buffalo is one of the most respected animals in their culture," said Brown. "The buffalo has so many functions. They could eat the meat, the skin kept them warm in the winter and they would use the horns to help

make weapons. Also, a buffalo will not retreat. It is one of the few animals that will go toward its aggressor. The Black soldiers more times than not would continue charging forward, and the Cheyenne respected their fighting skill and tenacity."

Brown went on to explain that the end of the Buffalo Soldiers technically occurred in 1944, when President Harry S Truman signed into law the desegregation of the U.S. Army.

"In reality, segregation didn't really end until 1946 or 1947," he said. "As we know, just because something is signed doesn't mean it gets implemented immediately. But we celebrate 1866 and 1944 as the official start and stop of the Buffalo Soldiers."

In 1993, the National Association of Buffalo Soldiers & Troopers Motorcycle Club was founded in Chicago. Today, there are more than 120 chapters in 39 states. There is also a chapter in South Korea and one that is being established in Germany.

In addition to sharing the story of the Buffalo Soldiers with other organizations, the club awards more than \$100,000 in scholarships each year to college students and high school seniors.

"Our vision is to ride our motorcycles, educate and give back," Brown said. "We represent the strong and proud men and the heritage of the Buffalo Soldiers. We want to keep that legacy alive." □

Safety Incentive Program: Are you missing out?

By Paul Robbins

W APA's Safety Incentive Program promotes the health and safety of employees by rewarding them for a number of safety and wellness practices. Are you missing out on the benefits of the program?



It's not too late to take advantage of this opportunity. The deadline for submission of the required program certification is June 30.



What is the Safety Incentive Program?

The Safety Incentive Program is an employee-driven initiative that is sponsored by Human Resources and supported by the regional and Headquarters Safety Committees. It promotes integrated safety practices, continuous safety improvement and a healthy workforce.

All federal employees actively employed at WAPA on June 30 are eligible for the program. More than 1,000 employees took part during 2020, which represented the program's largest number of participants yet.

Employees who participate can earn up to 20 hours of paid time off and up to \$300. Participation can also help them build a safer and healthier lifestyle and workplace.

How does it work?

Employees earn points toward the program for their participation in a wide variety of safety practices related to the five categories. Here are a few examples for each category.

Sprains, Strains and Bodily Injury:

Participate in a pre-job stretching routine or take a Learning Nucleus course on avoiding sprains and strains. You can also fill out a "Slip, Trip and Fall Hazard Assessment" for your work area, discuss it with your supervisor and submit to your Safety Office any hazard resolutions taken.

Safe Vehicle Operation: Take a course on safe vehicle backing, practice daily vehicle inspections or participate in specialized, hands-on driver training.

Health and Wellness: Complete training courses on ergonomics, stress management, psychological safety and other topics. If you'd like to quit smoking or otherwise stop using tobacco, you can earn a point for that, too.

Safety Participation: Present a safety topic or near-miss ex-

ample during a meeting or identify a safety issue and what you did to get it resolved. You can also take a Learning Nucleus course about Job Hazard Analysis or review a Learning Summary.

Facility Safety: Complete a Learning Nucleus course on ladder safety, fire extinguishers or office safety. You can also be rewarded for CPR, AED and first-aid certification and refresher courses.

As you can see, many Safety Incentive Program opportunities revolve around training and continued education. Teleworking during the pandemic has created more time for training, making this a great time to take advantage of course offerings.

How can I participate?

Employees may participate by completing the electronic, two-page Safety Incentive Program Certification form, which provides a list of categories, specific tasks and metrics for measuring success. Complete the certification form via the SharePoint link and list all of the activities that have been completed since July 1 of the previous year.

Each participant must submit the completed form to their first-level supervisor or equivalent manager by June 30.

What if I have ideas for improvement?

Every year, we accept ideas and suggestions regarding how to improve the process. For example, Human Performance and Just Culture was suggested and accepted as a new certification form category for next year.

Send any suggestions for improvement to your regional or Headquarters Safety Committee representatives. They meet in March and decide if the suggested topics will be added to the following year's program.

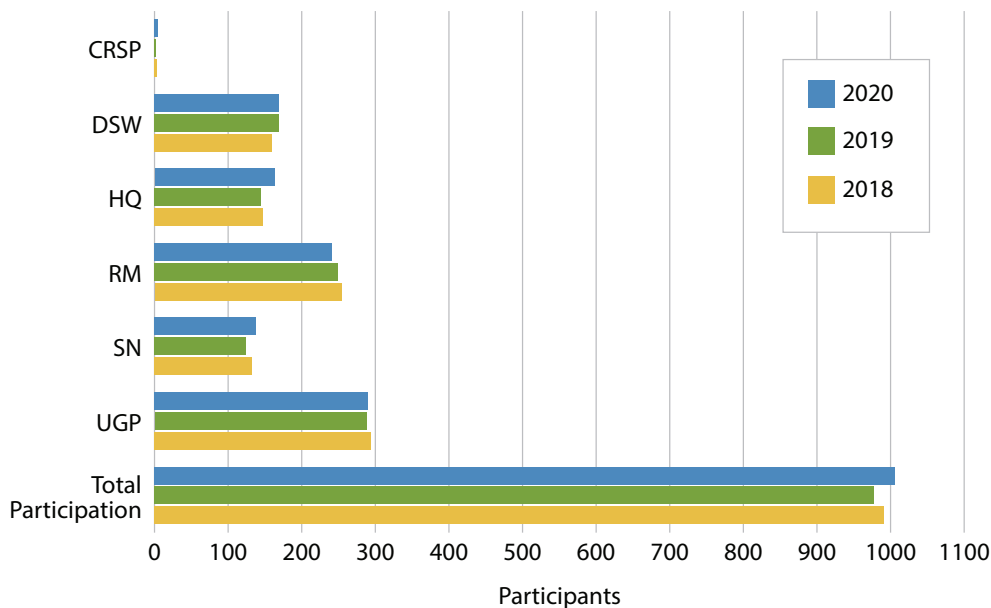
The Safety Incentive Program empowers employees and rewards them for health and safety practices. Don't miss out! Submit your certification form by June 30. □

Note: Robbins is a technical writer who works under the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract.

Visit myWAPA, Departments, Human Resources Shared Service Center, Awards for all forms, resources and information regarding the Safety Incentive Program.



Safety Incentive Program participation



LeBeau joins DOE 100-Day Town Hall

On May 17, Interim Administrator and CEO **Tracey LeBeau** joined Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm and many others from across the DOE for the department's virtual 100-Day Town Hall.

The event focused on the DOE's accomplishments during the first 100 days of the Biden Administration and its goals moving forward. It was streamed live to all interested DOE employees across the country.

LeBeau provided updates from WAPA regarding energy markets and transmission infrastructure financing.

"We share the commitment to accelerate expansion and modernization of the grid, create good-paying jobs and increase access to reliable, affordable, clean power. That's powerful," said LeBeau. "We look forward to working with all of you to modernize our grid for the generations to come."



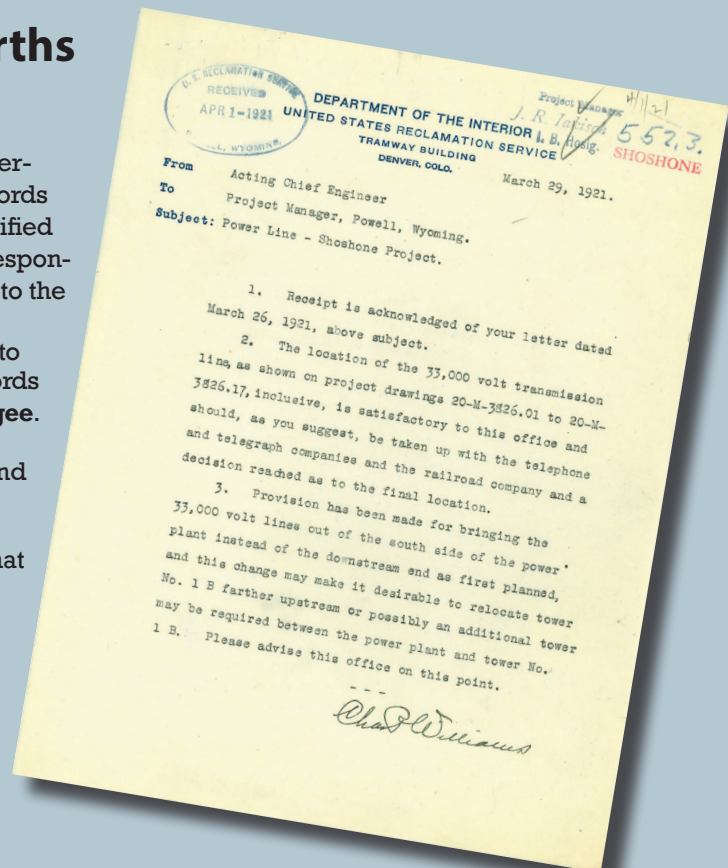
Records Management unearths century-old document

In the process of preparing to send a number of permanent records to the National Archives and Records Administration, Records Management recently verified the oldest known records in WAPA's custody: correspondence from the Department of the Interior relating to the Shoshone Project near Powell, Wyoming.

"This document illustrates WAPA's connections to the development of the American West," said Records and Information Management Manager **Chris Magee**. "This record also demonstrates how metadata enables information to be found, located, accessed and used over 100 years after it was created."

He went on to explain that many of WAPA's records must be retained for the life of the assets that they document.

"The goal of WAPA's Records Management program is to ensure that, in 20 years, WAPA personnel have the documentation they need to keep the lights on," he said.



Brief Transmissions

Administrative Control of Funds training due June 30

All federal employees are required to complete the Administrative Control of Funds training by June 30.

This training explains the fundamentals of the Antideficiency Act, including employee responsibilities and expectations to prevent spending or obligating funds in excess of appropriated amounts in support of WAPA's mission. It is important that all federal employees understand and comply with the requirements set forth in the guidance.

This training meets the intent of providing general education and awareness of Title 31 of the U.S. Code - Antideficiency Act and WAPA Order 534.1D, Administrative Control of Funds.

For questions regarding the content of the training, points of contact are provided at the end of the presentation.



For support, contact pmasschrdevelopment@wapa.gov or sos@ntc.doe.gov



WITCC Chat now available

On June 1, Information Technology launched WITCC Chat, allowing WAPA employees to connect to a WAPA IT Call Center agent through a chat function. Much as the phone system does, WITCC Chat queues employees and puts them in touch with the first available WITCC agent.

Because WITCC Chat interfaces with the program that agents use to resolve incidents and tickets, it will streamline the management of issues, resulting in improved service delivery and faster resolution.

Employees may launch WITCC Chat via the yellow chat icon at the bottom right hand of the homepage of the IT Service Portal. Access the Service Portal from the green tile on the right-hand side of the myWAPA homepage.

If you have not visited the Service Portal before, you will have to sign in. To streamline subsequent visits, follow the instructions at [myWAPA](#), [Telework Resources](#), [Related Information](#), [IT Service Portal: First time signing on](#)



Asset Management Program
Summary 2020

Western Area
Power Administration



Asset Management releases 2020 program summary

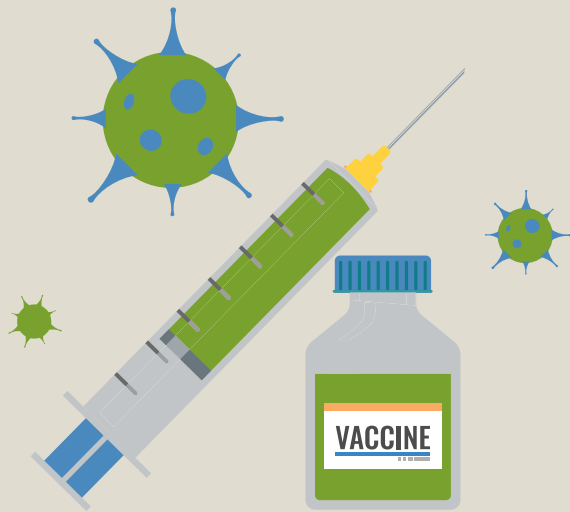
Asset Management has published *Shaping the Future Through Data*, its 2020 almanac.

In its first five years, AM has transitioned from being a basic "asset inventory" to an essential tool supporting data-based decision making. The almanac highlights the program's progress in making reports more accessible to business units throughout WAPA and its contribution to various planning and management projects. Strategies and principles AM developed for asset reporting are providing WAPA's Data as a Strategic Asset initiative with direction for efficiently governing data as an asset.

Collecting and analyzing data on equipment and systems continues to be central to AM. The document provides an overview of WAPA assets by region and network equipment, asset condition data on critical transmission equipment and 10-year projections on asset investment, health and risk.

Read the full document at wapa.gov, [Newsroom](#), [Publications](#), [Brochures](#) and [Pamphlets](#)





DOE authorizes leave for vaccination side effects

In addition to the previously authorized four hours of administrative leave per COVID-19 vaccine dose for federal employees, the Department of Energy also authorizes the approval of paid administrative leave for up to a total of two workdays for federal employees who experience side effects from the COVID-19 vaccinations.

This administrative leave may be used retroactively for those employees who already used sick or annual leave due to side effects from the vaccine.

Requests for this administrative leave must be made in ATAAPS as follows:

- Enter leave requests as Admin Leave (LN).
- In the Other field, enter "Admin Leave for side effects from COVID-19 Vaccine."
- ATAAPS may ask employees to duplicate their response under Remarks. If so, enter "Admin Leave for side effects from COVID-19 Vaccine" again in the Remarks field.

To retroactively request this administrative leave, employees should first cancel any previous leave requests and then follow the above steps to submit a new administrative leave request. Once the administrative leave is approved, employees must update their timecard, re-concur and recertify.

Contact HC.Policy@hq.doe.gov with any questions.



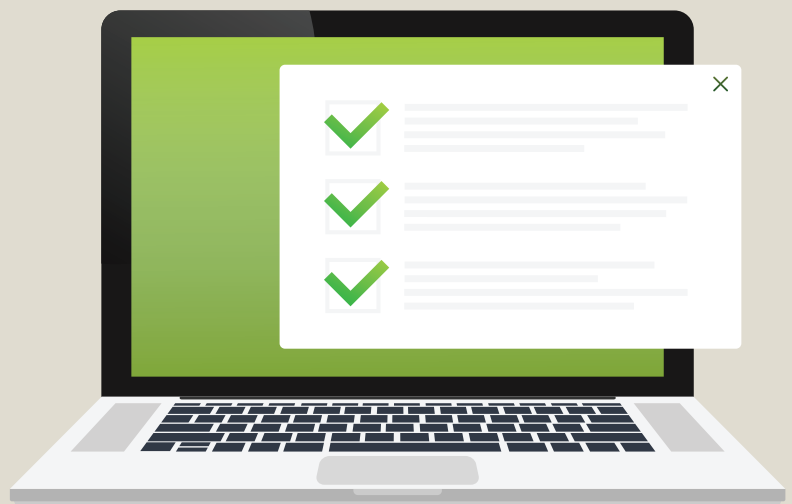
Modern Workplace rolls out two new apps

Information Technology is pleased to announce the release of two new apps as part of the continuing Modern Workplace rollout. Both are available now through your office.com account and can be used from almost any web browser or mobile device.

Microsoft Forms allows you to create surveys, quizzes and polls, invite others to respond, see real-time results, use built-in analytics and export results for additional analysis.

Microsoft Planner is a task and project management tool that integrates with Teams and other Microsoft products. Planner displays an overview of tasks in a shareable dashboard. With Planner you can create new plans and assign tasks, organize teamwork in a simple, visual way and track progress.

Keep an eye on the myWAPA homepage for upcoming Forms and Planner training.



Contact the WAPA IT Call Center via WITCC Chat or at 720.962.7111 with any questions.



Have news to share through *Closed Circuit*?

If you have news to share about accomplishments, initiatives or interesting developments within your region or program, contact *Closed Circuit* Editor **Philip Reed** at reed@wapa.gov.